

The original documents are located in Box 31, “5/7/76 - Remarks Upon Signing a Proposal to Congress Requesting Funds for Olympic Training Facilities” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

UNITED STATES MEDAL WINNERS

OF THE 1976 WINTER OLYMPICS

THE ROSE GARDEN (11:15 a.m.)

FRIDAY, MAY 7, 1976

-1-

I WANT TO EXTEND A VERY WARM WELCOME TO ALL OF YOU TODAY

-- THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LAKE PLACID ORGANIZING COMMITTEE;

PHILIP KRUMM, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIC COMMITTEE;

GERALD ZORNOW (Zor-no), CHAIRMAN OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION

ON OLYMPIC SPORTS, AND OTHER COMMISSIONERS OF THAT BODY;

DISTINGUISHED CONGRESSMEN; GENE COWAN OF ABC, WHOSE SPECTACULAR TELEVISION COVERAGE OF THE OLYMPICS BROUGHT THE THRILL OF VICTORY AND THE AGONY OF DEFEAT RIGHT INTO THE LIVING ROOM FOR MYSELF AND MILLIONS OF OTHER OLYMPIC FANS; AND FINALLY AND MOST PARTICULARLY TO THE SEVEN ATHLETES WHO WON MEDALS AT THE 1976 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES IN INNSBRUCK.

TODAY WE ARE HERE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO YOUR RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE OF AMATEUR SPORTS AND THE OLYMPIC EFFORTS OF THIS COUNTRY.

I DOUBT WHETHER ANYONE HERE, EXCEPT YOU ATHLETES,
FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE TREMENDOUS SACRIFICES THAT YOU
AND YOUR FELLOW TEAMMATES HAVE MADE IN ORDER
TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPETE IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF ALL AMERICANS
FOR THE HONOR WHICH YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE BROUGHT
TO OUR COUNTRY AND FOR ADVANCING THE CAUSE OF INTERNATIONAL
FELLOWSHIP. YOU MAKE US ALL VERY PROUD.

I BELIEVE THAT THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR GREATER
UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF AMATEUR ATHLETIC COMPETITION
IN THIS COUNTRY. FOR THIS REASON, I APPOINTED
A PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON OLYMPIC SPORTS LAST YEAR
TO EXAMINE THE NATURE OF AMERICAN AMATEUR ATHLETICS.

THEIR REPORT, DUE LATER THIS YEAR, WILL ASSESS THE ORGANIZATION
AND FINANCING OF AMATEUR SPORTS IN THIS COUNTRY
AND HOW IT AFFECTS AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL
COMPETITION SUCH AS THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE SUCCESS

OF AMERICAN OLYMPIC TEAMS IS THE AVAILABILITY

OF FIRST CLASS FACILITIES FOR TRAINING AND COMPETITION.

MANY OF THE MOST THRILLING EVENTS OF THE 1976 WINTER OLYMPICS,

LIKE THE BOBSLED RACES AND SKI JUMPING EVENTS, WERE HELD

AT FACILITIES WHICH REQUIRED TREMENDOUS EXPENDITURES TO CONSTRUCT.

EUROPE HAS SEVERAL SPEED SKATING RINKS AND 90 METER SKI JUMPS.

THE UNITED STATES HAS ONLY ONE SPEED SKATING RINK AND

NO 90 METER SKI JUMP.

AS A RESULT, AMERICAN ATHLETES IN THESE EVENTS MUST SPEND LONG MONTHS ABROAD TO PREPARE FOR COMPETITION OR LIMIT THEIR TRAINING.

AMERICA IS PROUD OF HER OLYMPIC ATHLETES

AND PROUD TO HAVE THEM TAKE PART IN THE GREAT OLYMPIC PAGEANT.

I AM PROPOSING, THEREFORE, LEGISLATION THAT WILL PROVIDE
SPECIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE 1980 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES
TO BE HELD AT LAKE PLACID, NEW YORK. THE FUNDS WILL BE USED
TO BUILD PERMANENT SPORTS FACILITIES, INCLUDING AMONG OTHERS
A SPEED SKATING RINK, A 90 METER SKI JUMP, AND A LUGE RUN.

THESE FACILITIES WILL NOT ONLY BE USED FOR THE 1980 WINTER GAMES
BUT WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE FOR UNITED STATES ATHLETES
TO TRAIN ON THEREAFTER.

I KNOW THAT MANY OF THE SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN
HERE TODAY, LIKE BOB McEWEN OF NEW YORK, HAVE WORKED HARD
TO IMPROVE AMATEUR ATHLETICS AND TO BRING THE 1980 WINTER GAMES
TO THE UNITED STATES. HOPEFULLY MY PROPOSAL WILL PERMIT
THE FULL REALIZATION OF THESE GOALS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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